



Raleigh
Arts



Public Art at Method Community Park

Call for Artists / Request for Qualifications



Method Community Center located in the historic Berry O'Kelly Agricultural Building

Summary

- Create Public Artwork at Method Community Park. This project is part of the 2022 Parks Bond.
- Artwork can be integrated into the renovation of the historic building or incorporated into the site.
- **\$215,000** budget to design and fabricate. Additional funds are held for engagement and accessibility.
- Up to three semi-finalists will be selected to interview and paid a **\$100** honorarium.
- **Deadline to apply: October 30, 2023**
- Submit online at: <https://raleigharts.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/74986>

Eligibility

1. This opportunity is open to individuals and teams **who live or work in the United States.**
2. Applicants must be legally authorized to work in the United States and have unexpired documents that establish employment eligibility.

3. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.
4. Applicants must have at least a three-year history of professional practice.
5. Applicants must have demonstrated experience in design through the creation of high-quality work.
6. Lead applicant cannot be enrolled in an undergraduate course of study in the visual arts as of January 1, 2023.

Budget

\$215,000 budget inclusive of design, artwork fabrication, community presentations, taxes, travel, and fees.

Raleigh Arts will hold separate funding to cover community engagement expenses and accessibility accommodations for the project. The arts office will administer these funds and can cover things like public meetings, creative input gathering events, working with local community historians, and hiring local artists to help with outreach. The Artist will work with Raleigh Arts to create an engagement plan.



The Pioneers Building was the Old Agricultural Building of the Berry O'Kelly High School, the first fully accredited and largest rural high school in the state of North Carolina for African Americans

Project Overview

The City of Raleigh seeks to hire an artist to create public art at Method Community Park. As part of the 2022 Parks Bond, the City plans to:

- Renovate the existing historic community center to address needed improvements and community priorities.
- The Community Center is housed in one of only two surviving buildings from the multi-building Berry O’Kelly School. Also known as the Pioneers Building, it now serves as a community center at Method Park, a City of Raleigh facility.
- The buildings and athletic facilities remaining at the Berry O’Kelly School campus reflect the history of an important Raleigh institution. Residents of the freedman’s village that evolved into Method had always prioritized education. Three schools existed in the late nineteenth century before Method’s most prominent resident, Berry O’Kelly, donated land in 1894 for a new school. A frame building with a gable roof housed the school until 1915, when a significant upgrade resulted in a ten-classroom brick edifice to house an elementary and high school. The new institution was called Berry O’Kelly Training School, and it consolidated three rural African American schools. Rosenwald funds helped expand the school in the 1920s, and by 1931, it was the state’s largest high school for African American students. The school remained in operation until 1966. The 1926 Agriculture Building and the ca. 1959 Gymnasium are the only buildings remaining. O’Kelly’s grave is on campus, and a memorial marker further honors and remembers his importance to the community.
- One of the project's goals is to highlight the rich history and diversity of the Method Community.

The project timeline for planning, design, and construction of these improvements runs from 2023-2028.

Public Art Goals and Opportunities

- Artwork can be stand alone or integrated into the renovation of the historic building.
- Because of the site’s historic standing, the City of Raleigh Historic Development Commission will need to review the artwork. Because this is a historic site, there will be some constraints on materials and colors.
- Method Community Center has some archival items in its collections that the artist can potentially work with.
- A local artist, Kulusm Tasnif, is currently conducting an Oral Histories project for the Method community, and those Oral Histories will be online as a community resource.
- Selected artist will have the opportunity to work with the architectural and design teams to integrate artwork into the landscape and/or buildings.
- Work with community stakeholders to define community and aesthetic goals for the artwork.
- Help to share the story of the deep history of the Method Community.



Agricultural Building of the Berry O'Kelly School, Image Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

About the Method Community

Method, a southwest Raleigh neighborhood, evolved from a freedman's village established in the 1870s. It was one of a dozen or so that surrounded the city in the years after Emancipation, when blacks moved from the countryside in search of work and housing. Of these villages, Oberlin and Method survived, were annexed into the city, and remain vibrant neighborhoods.

In 1872, half-brothers Jesse Mason and Isaac O'Kelly bought sixty-nine mostly wooded acres from William Ruffin Cox, who had been a general in the Confederate army. Mason and O'Kelly began selling multi-acre parcels to family and friends. In the 1870s and 1880s, the area was known variously as Planktown, Slab Town, and Save-Rent. The first two names described the simple log dwellings erected by the new property owners: one-story houses built with "planks" or "slabs" probably cut from the trees felled on site. The third name describes the transformational opportunity for land and home ownership that the place offered blacks.

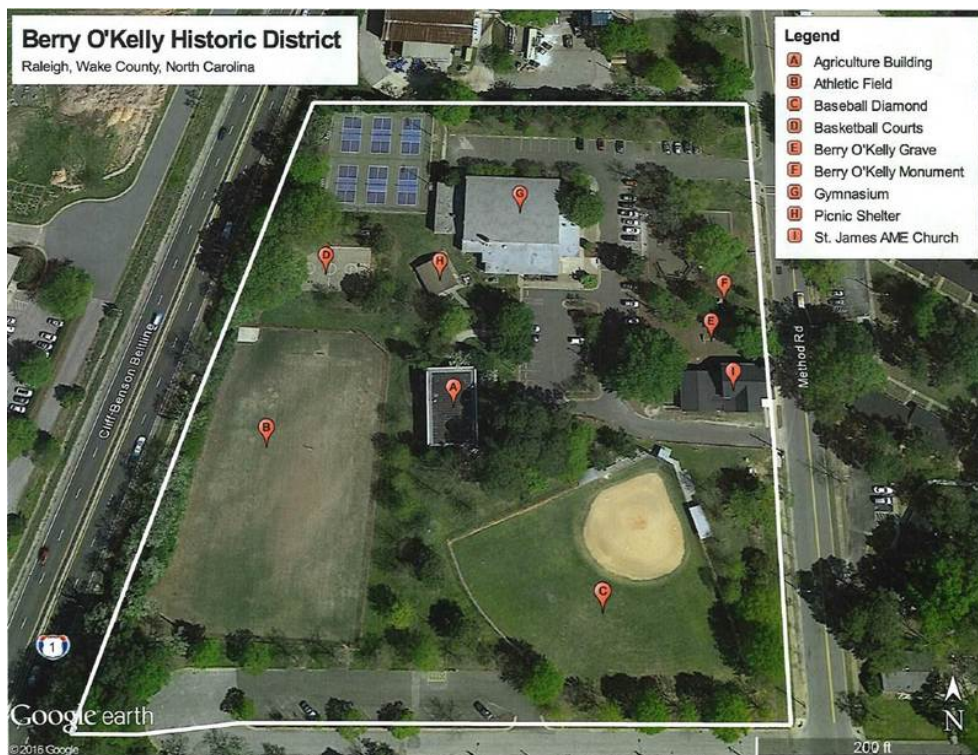
The nascent village was also called Masonville or Mason's Village, after Lewis Mason, who had convinced his father Jesse to purchase the land. Lewis bought some acreage from his parents and established a farm, growing cotton and keeping cows and chickens on about fifteen acres. He also wrote a brief history of the establishment of the village.

The community that developed was tight-knit. Several residents together established a grocery store, later purchased by Berry O'Kelly, who would become the village's most prominent resident. Similarly, the store became an important landmark and social hub. O'Kelly got a post office established in the store, which raised the prominence of the shop and loaned its name to the whole village: Method.

In the twentieth century, Method grew from an agricultural village into a suburb that included a school, churches, and a small grid of residential streets. Those who owned large parcels of land subdivided it for sale or to pass on to heirs. The largest plat was the Method Subdivision, made in 1919 by Berry O'Kelly to divide roughly eleven acres into three blocks totaling sixty-nine parcels. The Lillie Stroud Rogers House on Method Road stands in the Method Subdivision; many other bungalows like this one once populated the platted area.

Churches established in the late nineteenth century remain in Method, including St. James AME Church, which maintains a 1873 Gothic Revival sanctuary. The Oak City Baptist Church has occupied the lot at the corner of Method Road and Ligon Street for a century. Finally, buildings associated with the Berry O'Kelly School still stand at the north end of the neighborhood, in the Berry O'Kelly Historic District. The Agricultural Building is a vocational education building erected in 1926 and expanded by 1950 as part of the school. The gymnasium likewise survives, but the school building was demolished in the 1960s. Berry O'Kelly's grave and a monument are also in the historic district. Because of the opportunity for quality education that the Berry O'Kelly School offered blacks in Raleigh, the campus remains an important place in the history of Raleigh and Wake County.

This is a very diverse neighborhood that includes NCSU students, the Islamic Association of Raleigh, a multitude of international food markets and one of the oldest Black churches in Raleigh, Saint James AME. A helpful reference for additional information is the 2023 book written by historian Carmen Cauthen, [Historic Black Neighborhoods of Raleigh](#), which has additional information about the area and its history.



About the Site Buildings

The buildings and athletic facilities remaining at the Berry O’Kelly School campus reflect the history of an important Raleigh institution. Residents of the freedman’s village that evolved into Method had always prioritized education. Three schools existed in the late nineteenth century before Method’s most prominent resident, Berry O’Kelly, donated land in 1894 for a new school. A frame building with gable roof housed the school until 1915, when a significant upgrade resulted in a ten-classroom brick edifice to house an elementary and high school. The new institution was called Berry O’Kelly Training School, and it consolidated three rural African American schools. Rosenwald funds helped expand the school in the 1920s, and by 1931 it was the state’s largest high school for African American students. The school remained in operation until 1966. The only buildings remaining are the 1926 Agriculture Building and the ca. 1959 Gymnasium. O’Kelly’s grave is on campus, and a memorial marker further honors and remembers his importance to the community. Saint James AME Church stands at the corner of the campus, another institution founded and supported by those who lived in Method.

The Agriculture Building is the oldest of only two surviving buildings from the multi-building school complex founded by O’Kelly, a revered merchant, wholesaler, civic leader, philanthropist and proponent of practical education for African American youth. The original portion of the rectangular brick building was constructed using grants from the Julius Rosenwald Fund (established by the CEO of Sears, Roebuck and Company), matched with donated land and local funds raised in the community. Also known as the Pioneers Building, it now serves as a community center at Method Park, a City of Raleigh facility.

Following Berry O’Kelly’s death in 1931, his namesake school continued to serve the community of Method. As more schools for African Americans were established in the area, its enrollment began to fall. The push toward integration further affected the school’s enrollment (eventually leading to its closure in 1966). Nonetheless, there continued to be advocates for “separate but equal” school facilities for blacks and whites. This was probably a factor leading to construction of the gymnasium as advocates pressed for equalization of facilities in schools serving African Americans. The utilitarian brick building features the clean lines of mid-century modern design, with horizontally-proportioned grids of windows in large openings daylighting the interior spaces. A barrel-arched roof supported by metal bow trusses spans the large gymnasium space, flanked on three sides by one-story wings.

Selection Criteria and Process

Applications submitted in response to this RFQ will be reviewed by the City of Raleigh Public Art Director, who will then forward all complete and eligible applications received by the deadline to the Artist Selection Panel. The Panel may include a member of the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, community artists, arts professionals, design professionals, and other stakeholders.

The Artist Selection Panel will evaluate the qualifications of artists based on four criteria: artistic merit; appropriateness for the project; community engagement; and social/cultural relevance of work.

Project Timeline

RFQ Application Deadline	October 30, 2023
Semi-Finalist Selected & Notified:	November 2023
Semi-Finalists Interviews	November/December 2023
Project Awarded	December 2023

How to Apply

Apply online using this link:

<https://raleigharts.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/74986>

Those wishing to be considered must submit the following materials:

1. **Statement of Interest**

A statement, outlining your interest in this residency and your experience working on public art projects, or relevant art experience. Include how your work and experience will complement this residency.

You can submit this as:

- A written statement of 500 words or less
- Or a two minute or less audio or video clip. We will only play the first two minutes of audio for the panel.

2. **Biography**

A biography of no more than one page that includes information regarding your practice, experience, and education. If applying as a team, submit a single file containing separate biographies for each team member.

3. **Three Professional References**

Contact information for three references should be submitted, including name, title and affiliation, phone number and email address. References should be able to speak to your ability to provide services for a public art project or artwork of a similar scope.

4. **Previous Work, Digital Images**

Eight digital images of recent previous work (created within the past ten years) Each image should include: image number, artist's name, title, year, media, location, project budget, dimensions, commissioning agency, and collaborators or design professionals (if applicable).

Submission and Deadline

All RFQ materials must be received no later than **October 30 2023**, at 11:59 p.m. Incomplete or late submittals will not be considered.

Non Discrimination Policy

The policy of the City of Raleigh is, and shall be, to oppose any discrimination based on actual or perceived age, mental or physical disability, sex, religion, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial or marital status, economic status, veteran status or national origin in any aspect of modern life. The City of Raleigh Arts Commission strives for a diverse representation of voices, life experiences, views, and interests to reflect the collaborative community we have and wish to serve.

Additional Information

For questions, contact Jenn Hales, Public Art Coordinator for Raleigh Arts, Jenn.Hales@raleighnc.gov.

For relevant information regarding the project, visit the Raleigh Arts website at: <https://raleighnc.gov/services/arts/artist-calls>